THE THREE GOBLINS

M. G. TAGGART

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THE STORY OF
THE THREE GOBLINS

BY
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THE STORY OF
THE THREE GOBLINS.

ONCE upon a time there were three little goblins.

Their names were Red-Cap, Blue-Cap and Yellow-Cap, and they lived in a mountain.

The goblins had a great friend—a green frog whose name was Rowley.

Rowley came every year to see the little goblins, and told them stories about the Big World where he lived.

The goblins had never seen the Big World, and often asked their father to let them go with Rowley, but he always said, "Not yet, my sons.

The name of the goblins' father was Old Black-Cap.

He was King of the Mountain.

At last, one day Old Black-Cap called the three goblins and said to them: "I am going to send you into the Big World to look for something which the fairies stole from me a long time ago. A Red Feather which always belongs to the King of the Mountain. Go. my sons, and the one who finds it shall be king of this mountain after me."

Red-Cap, Blue-Cap and Yellow-Cap said good-bye to their father and climbed out into the Big World through a rabbit hole. When they had gone a little way they saw something lying on the ground. Something large and white and round.

"What is that?" they all cried together.

Red-cap, who was the eldest, got inside it to see what it was made of.

"Oh! oh!" cried Blue-Cap and Yellow-Cap. "It is moving! Stop! Stop!" But the white thing rolled away down the mountain with poor little Red-Cap inside it; faster and faster it went, and Blue-Cap and Yellow-Cap were left quite behind.

Now little Red-Cap was a brave goblin, but he was rather frightened when the White Thing began to roll so fast. He wondered if it would ever stop, when—Bump! Splash!—he found he was in the water, and something big with a smooth coat was close beside him. It was a kind water-rat who had seen the poor little goblin roll into the water.

"I can swim," said Mr. Rat. "I will hold you by the collar and take you to dry land again."

Red-Cap thanked the kind water-rat very much, and they sat down on the bank of the stream to rest. Red-Cap told the rat all about his father and brothers and the Red Feather, and soon Blue-Cap and Yellow-Cap came running up, quite out of breath, but very glad to find their brother quite safe and not even scratched.

They all soon said good-bye to the rat, who wished them good luck, showed them the road and told them to look in a tree —which he pointed out—where he said they would find something which would help them very much.

The goblins raced to the tree. Yellow-Cap won the race and climbed up quickly, while the others ran all round looking to see what they could find.

They found nothing, and Yellow-Cap was just coming down again when he spied a bird's-nest with three dear little blue eggs in it. He crawled along the branch to look at the eggs, and saw something white under the nest. Yellow-Cap pulled it gently, and out came an envelope. Full of joy he slipped down to his brothers.

They opened the envelope and found a sheet of paper on which was written in gold letters,—

"You who seek the Feather Red
First the Serpent's blood must shed;
In the cave where fairies dwell
The Feather lies, so search it well."

"Hurrah!" cried Red-Cap. "Let us make haste and find the cave."

Soon they came to a big dark forest, and after they had gone a little way they saw a fence and a large board on which was written in red letters,—

TOM TIDDLER'S
GROUND

TRESPASSERS
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The goblins looked over the fence and saw that the ground was covered with gold and silver!

"Oh!" they cried, "let us fill our pockets. What fun!" and they began to climb over the fence.

They all got safely down on the other side, and seeing no one about they began to fill their pockets with the shining money, singing, "We are on Tom Tiddler's ground, picking up gold and silver."

Suddenly they heard a big rough voice say, "Yes, you are on Tom Tiddler's ground, and Tom Tiddler will lock you all up, you little thieves."

The goblins dropped their handfuls of gold and silver, and found themselves caught up by a great big giant who carried them off, with great long strides, to his house.

Tom Tiddler took them into a large kitchen where Mrs. Tiddler was busy making the tea.

"Wife," said he, "put these goblins in the pantry, and we will have them fried on toast for breakfast."

The poor little brothers were locked up in the pantry, and they sat down on the floor holding each others hands very tight and shaking with fear.

At last they grew bolder, and began to think how they could get away. They tried to open the window, and found to their joy that Tom Tiddler had forgotten to lock it. They crept out very quietly and climbed down by the thick ivy which grew up the wall.

The goblins ran as fast as they could, only stopping to fill a sack which they had found with gold and silver. They knew that Tom Tiddler and his wife were at tea, and would not think of coming out for some time.

The brothers managed, after a great deal of hard work, to get the sack over the fence, and as it was too heavy to drag with them they agreed to bury it in the forest and dig it up as they came back.

Just when they were ready a rabbit came up to them. "Hullo, little chaps," said the rabbit, "where are you off to?"

"We are on our way to the fairies' cave," they replied.

"You have a long way to go yet," said the rabbit; "the cave is on an island in the sea; but I am going that way, and if you jump on my back I will give you a lift."

The little brothers thanked the rabbit very much, as they were feeling tired after their hard work. As soon as they were safely seated the rabbit started off.

On and on they went until they had left the dark forest far behind, and were on the sea-shore. Here the rabbit stopped, saying, "I can take you no farther; you have now to cross the water, and must consult the Great Fish. He will appear if you knock three times on the rock. Take also this red dust, you will find it useful;" and putting a little bag of red dust into Red-Cap's hand the rabbit ran off.

The goblins did as the rabbit had told them, and when they had knocked three times on a rock a large fish raised itself slowly out of the water and said, 'Why have you called me?"

"Please will you tell us how to get to the fairies' cave?" said Blue-Cap.

"Look between the rocks so green,
There a boat will soon be seen;
In the boat you all must sail,
Wafted gently by the gale."

said the fish, and sank again beneath the blue waves.

The brothers, after looking about for a little while, found a white boat between two big rocks covered with green seaweed. They pulled it out and got in, and no sooner had they sat down than a gentle wind sprang up and blew them steadily out to sea. They were rather frightened as they had never been on the sea before, but soon they saw that they were coming to land. The land proved to be an island, and when the boat stopped on the yellow sand the goblins all jumped out.

They made the boat fast by tying the rope to a large piece of rock, and feeling that their hardest work was coming walked bravely over the sands, carrying a boat-hook which they had found in the boat.

They soon came to a dark cave in the rocks. In front of the cave was a big dragon which breathed fire out of its mouth and roared like hundreds of lions. The goblins, after trying many times, managed to creep over the rocks behind the dragon, and throwing the dust which the rabbit had given them into its flaming eyes they at last, after a hard fight, killed the monster and entered the cave.

The goblins looked round in the darkness for the serpent of which they had heard, but they could not find it.

At last, when they were sadly thinking of going back to the boat, Red-Cap cried out that he saw something yellow in the dark shadow of a rock.

It was the serpent's tail!

They all ran after it, shouting loudly, and it led them some way down a rocky passage.

It went very quickly, and they had to run very fast to keep it in sight; but at last they caught it, and after a sharp struggle—in which poor little Red-Cap nearly lost his life—killed it.

The three little brothers stood looking at the dead serpent, and while they were looking it seemed to change! It moved! and grew thinner and darker, and the bright yellow colour turned to orange, and from orange colour to red, and then redder! and redder!! and redder!!! until they saw—that it was no longer the serpent, but the Red Feather for which they had come so far to look!

At that moment a bright light seemed to shine, and standing near the goblins was a lovely lady.

"Goblins," she cried, "welcome to the cave of the fairies. Long have I waited for this happy day, when my kingdom should be once more restored to me. You must know that many years ago the wicked wizard, Tom Tiddler, cast over me a cruel spell. I and my people were forced to leave our fairy isle, and wander in the shape of birds in the Big World. We were told that never would the spell be broken until three goblins should enter the cave in search of a feather. We therefore stole your Royal Red Feather, and hid it in our cave. No sooner had we done so than the cruel wizard turned it into a yellow serpent and put a terrible dragon at the entrance of the cave. Our friend Rowley the frog told your father that we had stolen the feather, and as soon as you were old enough we gave you the wish to undertake this journey. But for your courage I should still be in Tom Tiddler's power. In return for your bravery I now charm your Red Feather. Henceforth any goblin holding it in his hand shall have his wish—whatever it may be—granted. As the Princess said these words she touched the Feather with her wand.

The goblins thanked the lovely Princess many times, and asked her to send for them at once if they could ever help her. They then took leave of the fairies and started for home.

They sailed again over the sea and found the rabbit waiting for them. They jumped on the rabbit's back and off they went. When they got to the place where they had left the sack of gold and silver they found it had been dug up ready for them, and standing by it was a big blue bird with a red beak and red legs.

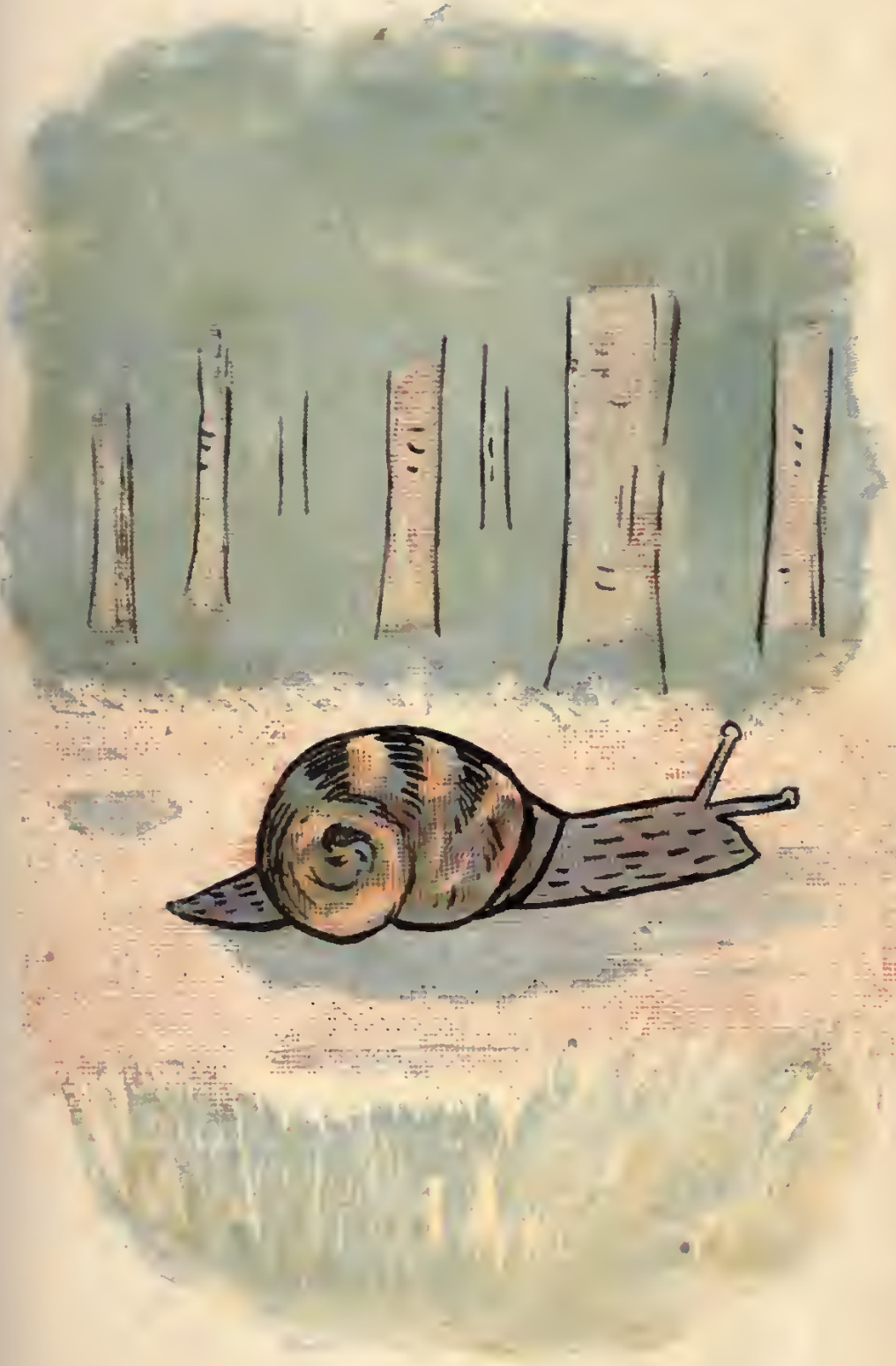
"Jump on," said he, "and I will pull you; I am Pukeko,* the fairies' servant, sent to take you back to the mountain."

They thanked the kind rabbit, and jumping on the sack went on their way. They had not gone far when they heard a great noise behind them, and looking round saw Tom Tiddler trying hard to catch them.

* New Zealand Swamp-hen.

Before Tom Tiddler could touch them, however, Blue-Cap pointed the Red Feather at him, and said, "I wish you to become a snail!" and Tom Tiddler turned at once into a crawling snail.

"He can never hurt any one again," the goblins cried with joy. "His treasure now is ours. Hurrah!"



They soon reached home, and Old Black-Cap was very pleased to have them back safe and sound.

"My dear sons," said he, "taking them in his arms, "the kingdom is yours. Rule it well together, as together you have found the Feather. I am an old man now, and shall be glad to see you on the throne."

Old Black Cap and his sons gave a mushroom feast to celebrate the goblins' safe return. They invited the rat, the rabbit, the pukeko, and Rowley the frog. and they all enjoyed it very much and lived happily ever after.

MUSHROOM
SAUCE